

MR. PRATT

A Tale of the Cape Cod Fisher Folk

By Joseph C. Lincoln

Author of "Cap'n Eri," "Partners of the Tide," Etc.

Illustrations by T. D. Melvill

"We'll be alongside the dock by quarter-past five. The down train leaves at 25 minutes to eight. You can thank your stars, Mr. Hartley."

"Twas a pretty cock-sure thing to say, and I ought to have known better than to crow afore we was out of the woods. But we'd come through so far enough sight better than a reasonable man could expect."

The narrows is a wicked place. The channel is fairly straight, but scant width, and on each side of it is a stretch of bars and rips that are bad enough in decent weather. Now they were as good an imitation of a salt-water Tophet as I want to see. Strip after strip of breakers, with lines of billowing, twisting slicks and whirlpools between. And the tide tearing through.

of the muddle of rain and black comes poking a big jibboom and a bowsprit. Next minute a two-master, with only a jib and reefed to sail set, went booming by us just under our stern. I could see a wink of her fore and lights and a glimpse of a feller holding a lantern by her rail and staring down at us. His face was big-eyed and scared. I've wondered since how ours looked to him. All the rest was black hull and waves and roaring. A mackerel boat trying to run into Naubekitt harbor, I guess she was. I callate the afternoon hull had fooled 'em into trying.

We didn't say nothing. Only Hartley looked up at me and grinned. I could see him in the lantern light. I shook my head and grinned back.

All the time I kept thinking to myself: "Sol Pratt, you old gray-headed



A Two-Master Went Booming By Just Under Our Stern.

fool, this is your final bust of craziness. You can't make it; you know afore you started you couldn't. You'll be in among the shoals pretty soon and then you and the Dora Bassett'll go to snailereens and cut that poor innocent city man with you. He don't know that, but you do. And all on account of a red-headed little toughy from the back alleys of New York, and a girl that ain't none of your relations. You deserve what's coming to you."

And yet, even while I was thinking it, I was glad I was making the try. Glad for Reddy's sake; particular glad on account of what it might mean to Martin and Agnes; and glad, too, just out of general consciousness. You see, 'twas like a light, and there's a heap of satisfaction once in a while in a dead old-fashioned, knock-down and drag-out, rough-and-tumble fight—that is, when you're fighting for anything worth the row.

The storm kept on; seemed as if 'twould never let up. And we kept on, too, three reefs in by this time, and the jib down. And with every tack I callated we was making better headway towards the bottom than anywhere else. I couldn't see nothing to get my bearings from, and hadn't no idea where we was, except the general one that, up to now, and by God's mercy, we was afloat.

Then, at last, the gale begun to go down. A landsman wouldn't have noticed the change, but I did. It stopped raining, and the wind was easing up. By and by the haze broke and I caught a glimpse of Middle Ground light, all most abreast of us. I unbuckled my flannel jacket and looked at my watch. Half-past two, and only three-quarters of the way to Wapatomac. We'd been eight hours and a half coming a distance that I've made over and over again, in that very sleep, in less than three. Hartley caught my sleeve.

"Will we get there?" he shouts. His face was all shining with the wet and his hair was too heavy with water even to blow in the wind.

"Don't know," I hollers back. "We'll try."

He nodded. The clearing of that haze had helped me considerable. I

could sight my marks, the lights, now, and we made faster time.

At last, after what seemed a fortnight more, came the first streak of gray daylight. The clouds was breaking up and it would be a nice day later on, I judged. But there was a living gale still blowing and the waves was running savage over the shoals ahead. The channel was narrowing up and I had to watch out every second. I sent Hartley amidships to tend center-board.

We beat in through Long Point reach. The life-saving station is on the Point, just abaft the lighthouse. I see the feller in the station tower open the window and lean out to watch us. I callate he wondered what asylum had turned that pair of lunatics loose.

Past the Point and now we come about for the run afore the wind up the narrows. Wapatomac village was in plain sight.

"With any sort of luck," says I. I sent Hartley for'ard to look out for shoals. He had one knee on the edge of the cabin roof and was climbing up, when I happened to glance astern. There was an old "he" wave coming—a regular deep-water grayback.

"Look out!" I yells. "Stand by!" That wave hit us like a house tumbling down. I'd braced myself and was, in a way, ready for it, but Hartley wasn't. He was knocked for'ard on his face. Then, as the bow jumped up, he was chucked straight back-wards, landing on his shoulders and left arm against the centerboard well. He turned a full somersault and his feet knocked mine from under me. Down I went and the tiller was yanked out of my hands.

Waves like that hunt in droves, generally speaking. The next one was right on schedule time. Up we went, and sideways like a railroad train. Then down. "Bump!" on the bottom. Up again, and down. "Thump! Crunch!"

That time we struck with all our heft. The Dora Bassett shook all over. She riz, still shaking, and the next wave threw her clean over the bar. We was in deep water for a minute, but just a little ways off was another line of breakers. And astern was the rudder, broke clean off, and floating away.

Twas no time for fooling. Hartley got to his knees, white, and holding his left arm with his right hand. I jumped and cast off the sheet. She floated then on a more even keel. Then I yanked loose the oar from its cleats alongside the rail and got it over the stern to steer with.

This got her under control, and down the lane, between two lines of breakers, we went, me with the sheet in one hand, the oar braced under 'tother arm, and the three-reefed mainsail well out. The cockpit was half full of water.

The lane of deep water narrowed up ahead of us and there was a kind of gate, as you might say, at the end. Hartley looked at me and I at him.

"Can you?" he asks. He was white as paper, but not from being scared I was sure. His left arm hung down straight and he kept rubbing it.

"Lord knows," I says. "Are you hurt?"

He didn't answer; just shook his head. On went the Dora Bassett. Bless the old girl's heart! She was doing her best to pull us through.

The gate was just in front of our nose. I set my teeth and headed her for the middle of it. A jiffy more, and the crazy breakers jumped at us from both sides. Their froth flew over us in chunks. Then we was through, and I fetched my first decent breath.

We was in a kind of pond now, where we had elbow room.

Martin looked astern. "Here comes a boat," says he.

'Twas the lifeboat from the station. They'd seen our trouble and was coming full tilt. I hadn't ever been took off my own boat by no life-savers, and I wasn't going to begin.

"Heave to!" hails the crew cap'n from the boat. "We're coming to take you off."

I didn't answer.

"Heave to!" he yells again. "Heave to!"

I turned my head a little ways.

"Go home and get your breakfast," I sings out. "We're busy."

They kept on for a ways, and then they give it up. I ran two or three more of them lanes and then, when I had the chance, I dropped my mainsail and histed the jib. And with that jib and the oar I picked my way for another spell, in and out and bewixt and between. At last we slid past the Wapatomac breakwater and up to the wharf. A nice piece of work for anybody's boat, if I do say it.

Hartley seemed to think so, too, for says he: "Skipper, that was beautiful. You're a wonder."

"Twenty minutes of six," says I. "We're on time."

There was an early-bird lobsterman on the wharf, come down to see how many of his pots had gone adrift in the night. He stood and stared at us.

"God aakes!" says he. "Where'd you come from?"

"Wellmouth," says I, making fast to a ring bolt.

"In her?" he says, pointing to the sloop. "In this gale? Never in the world!"

"All right. Then we didn't," I hadn't no time to waste arguing.

"Good land of love!" he says, kind of to himself. "Say! she must be something of a boat."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Poor Reddy.

Hartley had climbed on the wharf and now he was heading for the village. I got the sloop fast, after a fashion, and then run over and caught up with him. He was walking with long steps and looking straight ahead. His left fist was in the side pocket of his jacket and his face was set and pale under the tan. I happened to bump into him as I came alongside, and he jumped and gave a little groan.

"What's the matter with that arm of yours?" I asked, anxious. He'd stopped for a second and was biting his lips together.

"Nothing," he says, short. "Bruised a little, I guess. Where's the hotel?"

"Up the main road a piece. That's it, on top of the hill."

"Come on then," says he, walking faster than ever.

We went through Wapatomac village like we was waking for money. Some of the town folks was just getting up, and you could see smoke coming from kitchen chimneys and window shades being hoisted. Once in a while, where the families was particularly early risers, I smelt fried herring. In the center, by the post-office, the feller that keeps the market was just taking down his store shutters. He looked at us kind of odd.

"Good morning," he says. "Going to fair off at last, ain't it?"

"Guess likely," says I, keeping on. "You been on the water, ain't you?"

he asks. "Get caught down to the Point?"

Long Point's a great place for Wapatomac folks to go on clamming and fishing trips. I suppose he thought we'd been out the day afore, when it cleared that time, and had had to put in at the station over night. We must have looked like we'd been through the mill. Both of us was sopping wet, and I had on rubber boots and a sou'wester. I'd thrown off my flannel coat at the wharf.

I didn't stop to explain. I had to save my breath to keep up with Martin. The higher he got to the hotel the faster he walked.

The Wapatomac house is about the toniest summer place on our part of the coast. A great big building, with piazzas and a band stand, and windows and wind-mills and bowing alleys till you can't rest. We turned in between the stone posts at the end of the driveway and went pounding across the lawns and flower beds.

There was a sleepy-looking clerk behind the desk in the big hall. Nobody else was in sight, and the whole outfit of empty chairs and scattered newspapers had that lonesome look of having been up all night. Oh, yes! and there was a colored man mopping the floor.

Hartley went up to the desk, leaving muddy foot marks right where the clerk had been scrubbing.

"Good morning," he says to the clerk. "Dr. Jordan of Providence is one of your guests, isn't he?"

The clerk put down the book he was reading and looked us over. He done it deliberate and chilly, same as hotel clerks always do. If there's any one mortal that can make the average man feel like apologizing for living without a license, it's a sick, high-collared, fancy shirt-bosomed hotel clerk.

"What?" says the clerk, frosty and slow.

"Dr. Jordan of Providence. Is he here?"

His majesty looked at his book again afore he answered. Then he put his thumb between the pages to mark the place and condescends to draw out:

"What do you want with him?"

For once he'd made a mistake. There are times when it ain't wise to judge a feller by his general get-up. Martin stiffened, and he spoke clear and sharp.

"Answer my question, if you please," says he. "Is the doctor here?"

"No, he ain't."

"Where is he?"

"Gone."

I felt sick. Maybe Hartley did too, but he didn't show it.

"Where has he gone?" he asks. "I don't know that I've got to—"

"I know. And for your own good, my friend, I advise that you tell me. Where is Dr. Jordan?"

The chamber came down on his threats a little. I callate he figured that 'twas good policy.

"He's gone to Brantboro," he says. "He went yesterday morning and he's to leave there for Boston this forenoon. Then he's going to Bar Harbor for the rest of his vacation. Anything else you'd like to know?"

This last part was loaded to the gunwale with sarcasm.

"Yes," says Hartley emphatic. "Where is the doctor staying in Brantboro?"

"Cold Spring house. Want to know what he pays for his room?"

Martin didn't answer. He walked to the door. I stopped for a jiffy.

"See here, my smart aleck," says I to the clerk, "you'll have some more fun from this later on, when your boss hears of it. Do you know who 'tis you've been sassing? That young man is John D. Vanderbilt of New York."

There is some satisfaction in a first-class lie. It done me good to see that clerk shrivel up.

Martin was calling to me. "Sol," he asks, like a flash, "how can I get to Brantboro?"

"The livery stable is right around the corner; but I don't think—"

We was at that livery stable in less than two shakes. The feller that took care of the horses and slept in the stable loft was up and sweeping out.

"Have you got a horse that will take me to Brantboro in half an hour?" asks the Twin.

The feller stared at him. "Be you crazy?" says he.

Martin didn't answer. "Whose machine is that?" he asks.

He was pointing to a big automobile in the stable. A great big red thing, with a shiny painted hull and nickel-plated running rigging.

"Mr. Shearer's. He's away for a week and we're keeping it for him."

"Can I hire it?"

The feller's mouth fell open like 'twas on hinges.

"Hire it? Hire Mr. Shearer's automobile?" says he. "Well, I'll be darned!"

"Where's your employer?" asks Hartley, quick.

"Hey?"

"Your boss!" I sings out, dancing up and down. "For the land sakes wake up! Where is he?"

"In the house, I guess. Where do you—"

We met the livery stable owner just coming out of his kitchen with a pan of leavings for the pig. He'd just turned out. I knew him; his name was Ben Baker. Martin went at him hot-foot, speaking in short sentences.

"I want to hire that auto in your stable," he says. "I must get to Brantboro before seven o'clock. I'll pay any price. But I must have it."

Then there was more arguing. Baker said no. Was we crazy? He couldn't let another man's auto to the Almighty himself. And Mr. Shearer would kill him. And so forth and so on.

But Hartley kept cool. He must have the machine. He'd be responsible for damages. He explained about the doctor.

"I'll pay you—so and so," says he. Never mind the price he offered. It was so big that I wouldn't be believed if I told it. Baker didn't believe it either till Martin pulled out a roll of bills and showed him.

"I'll buy the thing if necessary," says he. "But I'll have it. Come, skipper."

"The shofer's up at Shearer's house," says Baker. "He—"

"Never mind the shofer. I can run it. Send your man with us, and I'll leave the machine in his care at Brantboro. Then the shofer can come after it. I'll write to Mr. Shearer and explain. Come on."

"It's all right, Ben," I says. "He'll do all he tells you, and more. You'll never make a chunk of money any easier."

Baker followed us to the barn, saying "No" all the time. He kept on saying it while the Twin was getting up steam, or some such trick, in the auto. He said it even after he'd got the money in his hand. The hired man climbed in behind. Hartley and me in front. We chuff-chuffed out of the stable door.

"For heaven's sake!" hollers Baker, "take care of the thing. I don't know what'll come to me for this job when Shearer hears of it."

We got down to the street. I looked at my watch. It was 25 minutes past six.

"Now, Sol," says Hartley, "you must help me if I need you. I can use only one hand, so you pull whatever lever I tell you to. Hold your hair on. We're going to go."

We went—oh, yes, we went! I'd never rode in a buzz cart afore and inside of five minutes I was figuring that I'd never live to ride in one again. Suffering! how we did fly!

Lucky 'twas early. We didn't meet a soul on the road. If we had they'd had lively times getting out of our way. Away ahead somewhere there'd be a house with a dog scouting out of the gate, his mouth open ready to bark. Next minute we'd go past that house like a sky-rocket, and the pup would be digging a breathing hole through the dust behind us. I didn't have to pull a lever for we had a clear field. Good thing I didn't, because I was too scared to know my hands from my feet. The stable man was awfully blue. Next time I see Baker he told me that the feller had nightmare for a fortnight afterwards, and they could hear him yelling "Whoa!" in his sleep as plain as could be. And they in the house with the windows shut.

Afore I had time to think straight, scarcely or remember to say more than a blue or two of "New I lay me," we was sizzling through Brantboro. We whirled into the big yard of the Cold Spring house and hauled up by the steps. Hartley piled out and I followed him. We'd used up just 18 minutes.

"Here!" says he to the clerk, a twin brother of the one at Wapatomac; "take this to Dr. Jordan's room."

He scribbled something on a slip of paper and chucked it across the desk. The clerk yelled for a boy and the boy took the paper and lit out. Pretty quick he comes back.

"He wants you to come right up, mister," says he.

"Good!" says Martin, tossing him half a dollar. "Lead the way."

The youngster started for the stairs, grinning like a punkin lantern. I flopped into a chair and felt myself all over to make sure I hadn't shook no part of me loose on the trip. Likewise I watched the clock.

In ten minutes more the Twin comes downstairs, and Dr. Jordan was with him. The doctor was a big gray-haired man with a pleasant face. He looked as though he'd dressed in a hurry, and he had a traveling satchel in his hand.

CREAMERY FOR MONETT

A Very Little Effort Will Secure A Creamery

A gentleman visiting with relatives here, a practical creamery operator, is desirous of erecting and running a creamery in Monett. He has been looking for a location for some time and believes that with a little effort a good business could be built up here.

He does not want to organize a stock company neither does he ask for a bonus, although it would show a generous disposition on the part of our citizens if he were offered a site for his factory. He says that if he is guaranteed a certain amount of milk by the farmers and ten cows to the section within a radius of five miles of Monett will be sufficient, he will build and equip the factory.

The milk question is up to the farmers of our neighborhood and they will be the ones to see that it is forthcoming. Dairying is much more profitable than the raising of grain and, it solicited, we believe the milk can easily be secured.

One farmer has agreed to milk twenty-five cows, others ten or more. At this rate the factory can easily be secured.

Notice of Final Settlement.

Notice is hereby given, to all creditors and others, interested in the estate of James P. Westbay, deceased, that we, Harry H. Westbay and Sarah J. Westbay, Executors of said estate, intend to make final settlement thereof at the next term of the Probate Court of Barry County, State of Missouri, to be held at Cassville, Mo., on the 8th day of February, 1909.

HARRY H. WESTBAY, Executors SARAH J. WESTBAY, First insertion January 8.

Notice of Final Settlement.

Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary upon the estate of M. Y. Todisman, deceased, have been granted to the undersigned, by the Judge of the Probate Court of Barry County, bearing date the 10th day of December, 1908. All persons having claims against said estate are required to exhibit them to them for allowance, within one year from the date of said letters, or they may be precluded from any benefit of such estate; and if said claims be not exhibited within two years from the date of said letters, they will be forever barred.

HATTIE F. TODISMAN and H. V. TODISMAN, Executors.

President Helps Orphans

Hundreds of orphans have been helped by the president of the Industrial and Orphan's Home at Macon, Ga. who writes: "We have used electric bitters in this Institute for nine years. It has proved a most excellent medicine for stomach, liver and kidney troubles. It invigorates the vital organs, purifies the blood, aids digestion, creates appetite. To strengthen and build up thin, pale, weak children or run-down people it has no equal. Best for female complaints. Only 50c at A. H. Cox & Co.

Fred Bashe of Exeter, visited in Monett Monday.

Mrs. A. K. Boggs is visiting her husband at Sapulpa, Okla.

The Carmen will give a box supper and entertainment January 28.

Miss Amanda Butler of Sapulpa, Okla., is visiting her uncle, Mat Butler and family.

Mrs. F. P. Sizer and children have gone to Yoakum, Tex., to spend the winter. Mrs. Sizer goes for the benefit of her health.

Henry Huerkamp is planning to sell his farm implements, etc. and move to Joplin in a short time.

O. Turnbull, of Joplin, came Saturday for a visit with D. A. Peters.

One firm in Cassville bought and shipped Wednesday 1,726 rabbits.

J. L. Carter formerly of Monett has moved from Las Animas to Fowler, Colo.

FREIGHT WRECK.

All West Bound Train Delayed Several Hours.

All trains from the east were behind time Monday night and Tuesday forenoon owing to a freight wreck two miles west of Richland. Train No. 9 that should have arrived here at 11 o'clock Monday night did not arrive until after noon Tuesday. The fast mail and other Tuesday forenoon trains were four or five hours late.

An engine and five freight cars were overturned in a cut and the clearing of the track was a difficult job.

RITCHEY.

We are having some winter at present.

Miss Pearl York visited Miss May Smith Thursday evening.

Will Smith and sister entertained a number of young folks Sunday evening.

Charley Armstrong killed hogs one day last week.

Mrs. Connor visited her son Will Sunday evening.

Hunting seems to be the order of the day since the snow.

John Williams drove to Granby Thursday.

Miss Rhoda York who has been working at Neosho for some time, is home on a visit.

Miss Ruby Smith visited her sister, Mrs. Chas. Armstrong one day last week.

Miss Pearl York has returned home from Coffeyville, Kan., where she has been visiting her sister, Mrs. Nancy Harris.

Joel Garner and family who used to be one of our old neighbors and who have been living near Monett and Peirce City for the last 15 or 20 years have moved back to our vicinity. We are glad to have them back. They are living on the old Barbie farm near Ritchey on Shoal creek. It is a good farm and one that will pay them for their work. We hope they will prosper and from what they say they will make a good living for they did well when they lived here before.

SNOW BIRD.

Notice of Final Settlement

Notice is hereby given, to all creditors and others, interested in the estate of S. W. Pierce, deceased, that I, James Johnston, executor of said estate, intend to make final settlement thereof at the next term of the Probate Court of Barry County, State of Missouri, to be held at Cassville, Mo., on the 8th day of February, 1909.

JAMES JOHNSTON, Executor. First insertion January 8.

Administratrix Notice

Notice is hereby given that letters of administration upon the estate of A. B. Drake, deceased, have been granted to the undersigned, by the Judge of the Probate Court of Barry county, bearing date the 27th day of November, 1908. All persons having claims against said estate are required to exhibit them to her for allowance, within one year from the date of said letters, or they may be precluded from any benefit of such estate; and if said claims be not exhibited within two years from the date of said letters they will be forever barred.

S. E. DRAKE, Administratrix. First Publication, 124,08.

REAL ESTATE AGENCY

We have a fine list of improved and unimproved Barry County lands that we are offering at low prices and on easy terms Monett property taken in exchange.

Tell us your Needs

Boucher & Strother

Purdy, Missouri